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STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
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P. O. Box 339
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February 7, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1188 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 9, 2023, Time 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill, provides comments, and requests clarification. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Human Services to establish a state corollary to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for certain higher education students. Appropriates moneys.

The Department appreciates the Legislature's efforts to address the financial hardship that students in Hawaii experience as they pursue education while ensuring they have the means to access healthy and nutritious foods for themselves.

The Department requests clarification regarding Section 2 (1) whether "an institution of higher education" is limited to colleges and universities or if it also includes technical or vocational schools. Also, with more access to online classes, does the "institution of higher education" need to be in the State?

For the Committee's information, the average SNAP benefit an individual receives is \$489 per month. The most recent report on the number of SNAP recipients participating in the Department's and the University of Hawai'i's (UH) Hawai'i Nutrition Employment and Training (HINET) program during the 2022-23 school year was 778 students. HINET is a program that offers college and vocational opportunities to SNAP recipients enrolled in UH community college programs. Using the HINET student population as a baseline, DHS estimates that establishing the program will require a 100% state-funded appropriation of \$380,442 per month, or \$4,565,304 annually. However, the appropriation may increase substantially depending on the number of eligible students.

Also, DHS requests clarification on whether the Legislature intends to serve residents who are non-citizens, as the federally funded SNAP program is limited to US citizens.

DHS will also need an appropriation to make the necessary program and system changes to implement this new benefit program and correctly allocate staff and system time in carrying out a State-funded program.

If the measure passes, DHS respectfully requests that the effective date is after or later than December 31, 2023, to give DHS time to make the necessary program and system changes and develop administrative processes and rules.

DHS will update the resources needed to implement this measure as the session progresses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Comments for H.B. 1180 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
House Committee on Human Services
Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 9:00AM

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for **H.B. 1180**, which would require the Hawai‘i Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a state corollary for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for college students.

Younger age groups generally struggle with food insecurity at higher rates than older populations. In fact, 38 percent of Hawai‘i residents between the age of 18 and 29 reported struggling to afford food in 2021, compared with 25 percent of the overall Hawai‘i population.¹ However, according to recent data from DHS, only around 7 percent of Hawai‘i’s population between the ages of 18 and 24 are currently enrolled in SNAP.

One reason for this discrepancy may be due to the federal eligibility restrictions imposed on college students. In order to be eligible for SNAP, individuals attending college must also be working at least 20 hours per week or have a dependent. This bill would offer state-funded benefits to young people who are eligible on an income basis, but who do not have a dependent or have the capacity to add 20 hours of work to their existing school schedules.

While Appleseed supports the intent of this bill, we would like to note that it would be a significant administrative burden on DHS. We recommend that any appropriation allows ample support for administrative staff, technical upgrades, and training for existing eligibility workers.

Thank you for considering these comments in your deliberation of H.B. 1180. We sincerely believe that this legislation will facilitate the success of Hawai‘i residents as they endeavor to obtain a higher education.

¹ Pirkle, Catherine & Sentell, Tetine. (2021). Hawai‘i residents continue to struggle to afford food in 2021.

HB-1188

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 6:31:45 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

According to a data brief published by the University of Hawai‘i, our state’s rate of overall food insecurity is estimated to be 22%, with “the age of those reporting food insecurity [being] younger than their food-secure counterparts.”

Further, the UH brief also found that 31% of students and homemakers were food insecure, exceeding the state average by approximately 9%. The data brief also noted that “[a]mong those reporting being food insecure, only small percentages actually access” the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Setting up a state corollary to the federal program and targeting it at SNAP-eligible full-time students in Hawai‘i will help deliver food security to one of our most vulnerable populations: college students. Please pass HB1188.

HB-1188

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 7:52:34 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cody Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Low-income students attending college are likely unable to afford the most recent cost of living increases. SNAP for students would help ensure they can focus on their studies rather than worrying about the current state of the economy.

We should also try to promote that these students get connected with local food sources, eg. via Farm Link Hawaii. Apparently Vitamin C only lasts a short amount of time after harvest and must be eaten fresh. I've been able to lose 60lbs with keto and intermittent fasting, a diet promoted by Dr. Eric Berg on Facebook, which focuses on reducing carbohydrate intake and increasing fat and fiber intake. I think this approach of reducing carbohydrate intake (by replacing carbohydrates with fresh vegetables) will be extremely beneficial for the mental and physical health of Hawaii residents.

HB-1188

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:18:21 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hunter Heavilin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ensuring that students have access to nutritious food is essential for their health and academic success. The current financial strain of college education, combined with the high cost of living in Hawaii, puts many students at risk of food insecurity.

This program will provide much-needed support to students who are struggling to make ends meet, enabling them to focus on their studies without worrying about where their next meal will come from. The appropriation of funds in the bill is a crucial step in the right direction and will help address the issue of food insecurity among college students in Hawaii. Investing in the well-being and future success of our students is a wise investment in the future of our state.

HB-1188

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 1:01:40 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom a Kanaka Maoli.

I'm writing in SUPPORT of HB118.

me ke aloha 'āina,
Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili